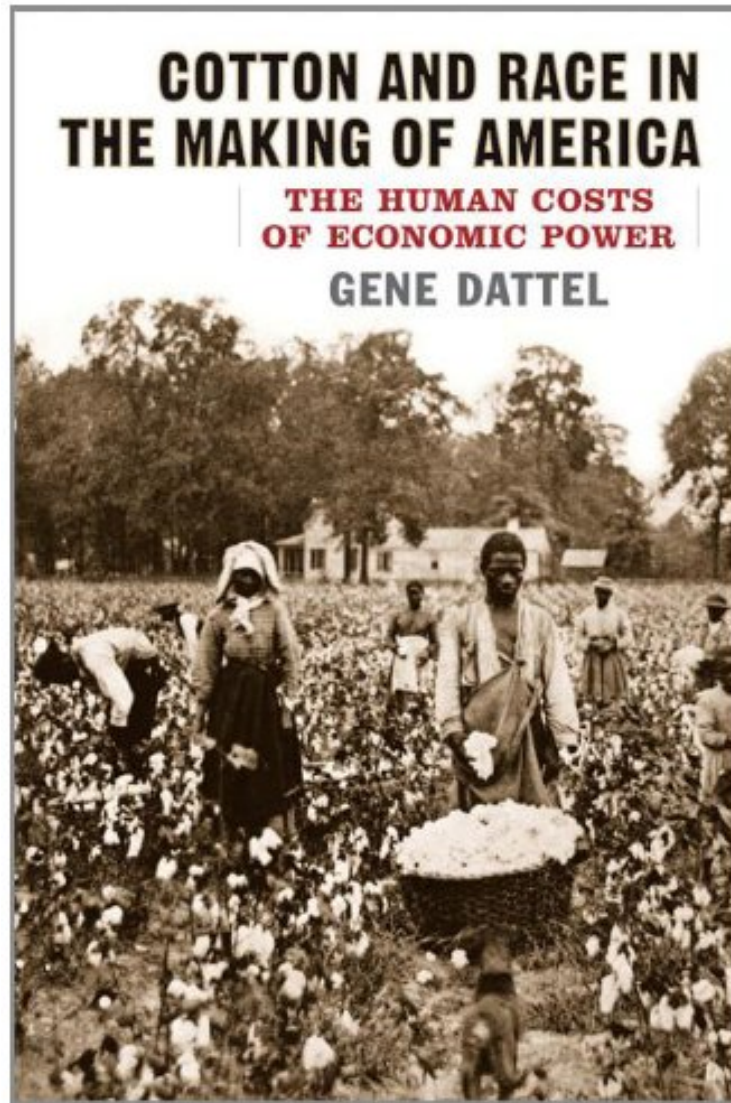


Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power

Gene Dattel

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Gene Dattel : Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must Know The Past To Move ForwardBy Evelyn McDowellThe gap between what we are told about slavery in school and what really happened, why it happened, and how it affects

us today is vast and wide. This book does a great job of filling in some of the gap. We need more books like this so the American people can heal from this awful period in our history. Until we know the truth, we are stuck in the past. I am the president of an hereditary society call Sons and Daughters of the United States Middle Passage ([...]) and we encourage accurate and complete information about the institution of slavery in the US and I am happy to recommend this book.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Horrifying and shameful account of economics and slaveryBy Judith JohnsonAuthor Gene Dattel takes the tragedy of slavery and economics of cotton production and weaves an engrossing story of enormous importance even today. He examines the origins of the humble cotton plant and its horrific intertwining with slavery; its astounding importance in international trade and the true economic origins of the Civil War. He places blame fairly and all round, no section of country was blameless here, in fact the North made enormous profits on the production of cotton and the transportation and sale of slaves.The writer's style is interesting and very comprehensible, I am awed by his ability to give a tragic human face to such dry economic data. You will never look at a cotton item the same way again I promise you.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy patrick f. nolanExcellent

Since the earliest days of colonial America, the relationship between cotton and the African-American experience has been central to the history of the republic. America's most serious social tragedy, slavery and its legacy, spread only where cotton could be grown. Both before and after the Civil War, blacks were assigned to the cotton fields while a pervasive racial animosity and fear of a black migratory invasion caused white Northerners to contain blacks in the South. Gene Dattel's pioneering study explores the historical roots of these most central social issues. In telling detail Mr. Dattel shows why the vastly underappreciated story of cotton is a key to understanding America's rise to economic power. When cotton production exploded to satiate the nineteenth-century textile industry's enormous appetite, it became the first truly complex global business and thereby a major driving force in U.S. territorial expansion and sectional economic integration. It propelled New York City to commercial preeminence and fostered independent trade between Europe and the United States, providing export capital for the new nation to gain its financial "sea legs" in the world economy. Without slave-produced cotton, the South could never have initiated the Civil War, America's bloodiest conflict at home. Mr. Dattel's skillful historical analysis identifies the commercial forces that cotton unleashed and the pervasive nature of racial antipathy it produced. This is a story that has never been told in quite the same way before, related here with the authority of a historian with a profound knowledge of the history of international finance. With 23 black-and-white illustrations.

From Publishers WeeklyTwo themes, one explicit, one implicit, compete in this exploration of the link between the development of American capitalism and the devastation of the African-American community. The price of cotton as the determinant of America's destiny, influencing and even overcoming individual will and ethical behavior is the fully explicit one. In treating it, Dattel (*The Sun Never Rose*), formerly a managing director at Salomon Brothers and Morgan Stanley, offers an economic history of cotton. The book's chronological path absorbs the creation of the Confederacy, the waging of the Civil War, Reconstruction, the rise of the Klan, the development of sharecropping, the displacement of black labor by machine and the falling price of cotton. The secondary and competing theme is Northern complicity in the slave trade, the cotton economy, segregation, racism and the development of the black underclass in the North and South, with its destructive behavioral characteristics. The economic slant leads to interesting tables and statistics concerning fluctuations in the price of cotton, but for serious readers, the usefulness of Dattel's work is diminished by his heavy reliance on secondary sources and casual documentation. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Gene Dattel turns economic history into a gripping narrative in this sweeping synthesis of an important but underappreciated chapter in the American past. From Whitney's gin to the mechanical picker, Dattel shows just how close the links have been between King Cotton and the race issue. This book is highly recommended. (Gavin Wright, Stanford University)This is a book not just for those who grew up in the cotton fields of Mississippi as I did, but far more than that it is a challenging and compelling account of the complex role which cotton has played in the economic, racial, and political history of our nation. No one is better equipped to present that story than Gene Dattel, a superbly gifted writer, who also happens to possess an encyclopedic knowledge of this fascinating subject. This volume elevates to an important new level our comprehension and appreciation of a largely neglected chapter in our conflicted past. (William F. Winter, former governor of Mississippi)Gene Dattel grew up in the Mississippi Delta, historically the center of cotton production in the United States, and a major target of voter registration workers in the 1960s. Thereafter he spent twenty years on Wall Street. These experiences superbly position him to remind us, in overwhelmingly persuasive detail, that for almost a century and a half cotton was America's leading export; and that before, during, and after the Civil War, white America, North as well as South, endeavored to keep an African American labor force contained' in the cotton fields. Thus cotton was the foundation of both the growth of the national economy and of racism in the United States. (Staughton Lynd, author of "Stepping Stones: Memoir of a Life Together")This is an engrossing and revealing study. It should be read not just by history buffs but by all Americans who want to understand the events and forces that

shaped and left their imprint on our country. The book captures with great style and intensity the overwhelming influence of cotton and slavery on our economy, finances, social behavior, and political life. Cotton and slavery prevented the formation of a more perfect union in 1776 and as the author concludes America no longer needs cotton, but still bears cotton's human legacy. (Henry Kaufman, economist; author of *On Money and Markets*) A very powerful and informative book. . . . Once I started to read it I was hooked. . . . A landmark, combining a firm grasp of finance and its controlling impact on the pattern of rural life in cotton growing regions with human sympathy for both field hands and planters. (William H. McNeill, Professor Emeritus, University of Chicago, and author of *The Rise of the West*) A fascinating account of an essential aspect of American history. Gene Dattel brings clarity and insight to a subject we've long known about but not known well. A model for integrating economic, social, and political history and a terrific read too. (H. W. Brands, professor of history at the University of Texas and author of *The Money Men*) I am very impressed by the extensiveness of the research, the quality of the writing, and the vigor of the narrative. Gene Dattel has produced an important book that shows how 'King Cotton' could, all too often, be a cruel tyrant. The book will be welcomed by both specialists and the general reader. (John McCardell, professor emeritus of history at Middlebury College) Gene Dattel has produced a superb study of King Cotton's reign over the United States of America. Though exceptionally well versed in the economic history of cotton production, he never loses sight of the human suffering caused by slavery and its consequences. He also gives a first-class account of the politics of cotton. From the Constitution to the Civil War to the Civil Rights movement, each of the key events in the history of the United States looks quite different when you understand the (usually malign) role King Cotton played. (Niall Ferguson, Laurence A. Tisch Professor of History and William Ziegler Professor of Business Administration, Harvard) Books about American history tend to be either triumphal or highly critical. Gene Dattel's study of the racial legacy of cotton, America's leading export up to World War II, is neither. Above all, it is informed, honest, and balanced. Dattel explains insightfully just how slavery and racial discrimination came to plague our nation's ideals and the promise of American life. Mostly it was a by-product north and south, east and west of trying to earn a buck, of pursuing the Almighty Dollar. His book is a gem one of the finest works on the American national experience to appear in many years. (Richard Sylla, New York University) Eugene Dattel's command of the details of American economic and social life is impressive in this sweeping study of the relationship between cotton and its human legacy in the treatment of African Americans. The book is full of sage judgments and fresh insights, eminently fair and unflinching in its critical assessments. He shows the power of finance and the search for profit in shaping American attitudes from the Constitutional Convention to contemporary issues of cotton's decline and the search for social justice for the people who worked the fields of this global crop. Dattel skillfully portrays the spaces of cotton's kingdom, from the Mississippi Delta fields to the board rooms of New York City's financial companies, and offers compelling evidence of the materialism that drove American life around cotton, often compromising the better angels of our nature. (Charles Reagan Wilson, Chair of History and Professor of Southern Studies, University of Mississippi) Gene Dattel's book tells the story of the irresistible power of cotton that changed the destiny of the nation not just the region. America's material obsession blossomed in the cotton fields, where blacks were trapped. Racial hostility both North and South was the enabler. His book masterfully captures the history and its painful legacy. (Morgan Freeman, actor) Two themes, one explicit, one implicit, compete in this exploration of the link between the development of American capitalism and the devastation of the African-American community. The price of cotton as the determinant of America's destiny, influencing and even overcoming individual will and ethical behavior is the fully explicit one. . . . The secondary and competing theme is Northern complicity in the slave trade, the cotton economy, segregation, racism and the development of the black underclass in the North and South, with its destructive behavioral characteristics. (Publishers Weekly) Gene Dattel has written a very important and necessary book, by locating the expansion of cotton production as a driving force not only in the antebellum South, but in the economy at large. He exposes slave-produced cotton's central role in causing the Civil War and as the global economic engine that prolonged slavery. Cotton was coveted by New York merchants and the textile barons of England and New England. He shows that after the Civil War cotton and race remained linked until technology finally displaced black labor. He devastatingly critiques the complicit role of the racist North in containing African Americans in the cotton fields. The legacy of this vital crop was economic growth and the social tragedy of slavery and segregation. No examination of American heritage is complete without an understanding of the force that cotton wrought upon its economic and social landscape. America's racial dilemma cannot be sequestered to one part of the country. (Roger Wilkins, Clarence J. Robinson Professor Emeritus, George Mason University) Don't miss this one. (Delta) This is an epic story with a deeply tragic element to it, as the book's subtitle makes clear; and Dattel explores it with a steeliness that raises the most serious questions about the nature of the American democratic experiment today. (Lee A. Daniels *The Defender* Online Blog) For many people, Gene Dattel's study will be an eye-opener guaranteed to change their idea of the American experience. . . . A narrative that is both an impressive work of history and an important sociological masterwork. (Foreword s) Although most of the facts in this book will be familiar, Dattel nicely draws together the literature on the cotton South, financial markets, and northern racism to make the compelling argument that the South's desire for cotton and northern complicity irrevocably altered American racial history. . . . Dattel's choice to conclude

with a technological innovation fits well with one of his underlying themes: history is largely shaped by technology and finance. (H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online) This is a highly readable account of the centrality of cotton in any attempt to understand the dynamic historical interplay of race relations and economic development in the United States. Paraphrasing Marx, the book argues that without slavery there would have been no cotton and without cotton no modern industry. . . . Compelling. (The Antioch) Independent scholar Dattel provides a thoughtful analysis of cotton's economic power and the ways in which it helped shape race relations in the U.S. . . . Recommended. (CHOICE) Cotton and Race demonstrates clearly and coherently the importance of slavery and commodity agriculture to the economic history of the United States. . . . The book provides a satisfying overview of the scholarly literature and its findings. . . . It is the author's tone that makes this book useful, as well as the organization of material. . . . For the average student in a general U.S. history survey, or an upper-level class in southern business or history, Dattel hits the nail on the head. (Business History) The book is as important as it is provocative. . . . Dattel makes a valuable contribution indeed. (The Journal Of Economic History) Dattel connects these forces in a way that offers a fresh analysis of King Cotton's place in US history. . . . Dattel goes to great lengths to explicate how the arrangements of these banking, transportation, and manufacturing concerns affected life on southern farms. . . . A highly readable non-academic sweep through cotton's impact on American civilization, [the reader] will not be disappointed. (Agricultural History) About the Author Gene Dattel grew up in the cotton country of the Mississippi Delta and studied history at Yale and law at Vanderbilt. He then embarked on a twenty-year career in financial capital markets as a managing director at Salomon Brothers and at Morgan Stanley. A consultant to major financial institutions and to the Pentagon, he established a reputation as a foremost authority on Asian economies. His *The Sun That Never Rose* remains the definitive work on Japanese financial institutions in the 1980s. Mr. Dattel is now an independent scholar who lectures widely and has served as an adviser to the New York Historical Society and the B. B. King Museum. He lives in New York City. For more information, see www.genedattel.com.